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ABSTRACT

To study aspects of P.L. 94-142 (Education for All Handicapped Children Act) that prove both most and least problematic for rural special education cooperatives, which is the most prevalent type of cooperative arrangement, a sample was selected that included the 2 Federal Education Regions (from a total of 10) determined to contain the nation's most rural areas: Region IV (8 Southern States) and Region V (6 Midwestern States). Only those states containing special education cooperatives were used. After much refinement, a questionnaire was sent to 157 rural cooperative directors--135 (86%) responded. The joint agreement cooperative arrangement was most frequently used (38%), however the cooperative arrangement did not appear to effect compliance with P.L. 94-142 mandates. Area size and distances hampered service provision, however. The least difficult aspects to comply with were parental rights, assessment issues, and the Individual Education Plan (IEP). The most difficult were issues relating to personnel knowledge regarding special education, specified timelines, and parental attendance at IEP meetings. It was recommended that teacher training institutions alter their educator preparation programs, teacher certification boards examine their license requirements, state legislatures change their funding formulas to provide equity of funding nationwide, and further study be done to see if these results are representative of the entire country. Eleven references and 8 tables are appended. (JMM)

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COMPLIANCE WITH PL94-142 MANDATES: POLICY IMPLICATIONS

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With the passage of PL94-142 came the realization that many barriers to the provision of quality special education programs exist in rural areas. These barriers include: funding inadequacies; difficulty recruiting and retaining qualified personnel; underdeveloped services; and transportation difficulties. Moreover, the mandates of the law and the consistency with which these mandates are applied may hamper the provision of quality services (Schrag, 1979).

Because the provision of adequate special education services within an individual school district was often unfeasible due to limited resources and a scattered diverse special education population, cooperative arrangements seemed a logical alternative. The minimum allocation of $7500 per application for PL94-142 monies also fostered collaboration as many rural school districts were unable individually to generate a sufficient allocation.

Cooperative arrangements vary on many dimensions including: number of school districts served; mode of governance; funding sources; staffing patterns; services rendered; professional personnel employed; and stated goals. Even where uniformity might be expected (i.e. intermediate units operating under the same state mandates) a large amount of variance occurs.

Regional cooperatives are not a panacea for the difficulties inherent in providing special education services in rural areas. Cooperative arrangements may produce or exacerbate a variety of problems including: transportation difficulties, parental involvement, goal displacement, locus of decision making, physical location of the unit, personnel administration, and abrogation of responsibility for handicapped children

to the cooperative unit (Helge, 1984; Ondell, 1982; Kirmer, Lockwood, Mickler, & Sweeney, 1984).

Within the literature on rural special education, ten components are identifies as essential for a successful rural cooperative. These are:

1. legilslation enabling cooperative development;
2. maintenance of local ownership of cooperative programs;
3. a spirit of cooperation among memeber school district;
4. protection of local autonomy;
5. dedicated leadership;
6. mission clarity;
7. ongoing planning;
8. clear lines of responsibility;
9. delegation of authority and responsibility; and,
10. adequate resources.

Given the challenge of implementing PL94-142 in rural areas along with the growth of cooperative arrangements, this study is aimed at discovering the aspects of PL94-142 that prove both most and least problematic for rural special education cooperatives as well as the most prevalent type of cooperative arrangements. It will determine whether cooperatives possessing the above components are more effective in implementing mandated special education procedures and whether cooperative size has any effect on compliance with PL94-142 mandates. Policy implication resulting from this study will then be discussed.

Despite a well recognized need for information concerning the provision of special education services in rural areas (Jordan, 1966; Sher, 1977; Helge, 1984a) a dearth of research exists. The meager body of existing literature is viewed as: lacking experimental research; lacking sophistication; largely experiential based; failing to provide a comprehensive view of the rural education situation; and limited in its usefulness for policy formation (Stephens, 1984). Thus, the need for research concerning rural special education is evident.

Method

For this study, a cooperative is any inter-district administrative arrangement that provides services to member school districts. Cooperatives range from informal agreements between two or more local school districts to structures imposed by a state education agency with a regulatory or service orientation. There are eight basic types of cooperative arrangement:

1. regional state agencies where administrative authority remains with the state department of education;
2. formal intermediate units, the second level of a three tier state education hierarchy;
3. mandated regional service agencies that remain apart from the formal state education hierarchy;
4. special school districts enabled by state legislation to provide designated services in a given locality;
5. voluntary cooperatives with administrative authority granted by the local school district to a new unit that undertakes

responsibility for the provision and administration of special education services;

6. joint agreement cooperatives, an undertaking by two or more local school districts to provide special education servicess on a regional basis with administrative authority remaining at the local level;
7. satellite cooperatives where one school district provides special education administrative services to a group of neighboring school districts; and,
8. school study (development) councils, a loose confederation of local school districts under the sponsorship of a local college of education whose purpose is to solve defined educational problems existing in the member schools.

For this study a cooperative is considered rural when serving an area with less than 150 inhabitants per square mile or where more than 60% of the county inhabitants live in rural areas as defined and measured by the United States Census Bureau. Cooperatives serving regions located within Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas are not considered rural.

Sample

The United States is divided into ten Federal Education Regions. This study draws its sample from two of them: Region IV comprised of eight Southern States, Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee; and, Region V comprised of six Midwestern States, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio and

Wisconsin. These regions were selected because they include some of the nation's most rural areas.

The survey sample was obtained by writing to the State Department of Education in each of these 14 states and requesting a listing of special education cooperatives. These listings were used to determine whether cooperative arrangements existed. Four states, North Carolina, South Carolina, Mississippi and Florida indicated that cooperative arrangements did not exist and were eliminated from the sample. From the remaining listings 157 rural cooperatives were identified. The director of each cooperative was selected for inclusion in the survey.

Instrument

To collect data regarding compliance with PL94-142 mandates, a written questionnaire was developed using the Total Design Method (Dillman, 1978). To determine content validity, the questionnaire was submitted to an expert panel including professors of special education, members of county offices of education, and one member of the Federal Office of Education. A pilot test was conducted during the summer of 1984. Based on pilot study results, several questions that caused confusion were revised.

Factor analysis using a varimax rotation was performed to determine the questionnaire items accounting for the greatest amount of variance. This led to a reduction from 53 to 37 items. A reliability assessment of the questionnaire using Cronbach's Alpha resulted in a standardized item alpha of .85.

Compliance Scales

Seven scales were constructed to determine the extent of compliance with PL94-142 mandates:

1. assessment of students referred for special services;
2. placement of students in need of special education services;
3. programming for students in need of special services;
4. teacher knowledge related to special education;
5. administrator knowledge related to special education;
6. in-service regarding special education;
7. general compliance.

Reliability assessments using Cronbach's Alpha were performed on each of the seven scales (see Table 1).

Insert Table 1 about here

Results

Of the 157 rural cooperative directors surveyed, 135 (86%) responses were received. One person refused to complete the questionnaire. Another person had retired and the position had not been filled. (This information was sent by a person in the agency who had previously completed the questionnaire). Twenty directors failed to return the questionnaire. Of the 135 completed questionnaires, six respondents indicated they represented individual school districts and were eliminated from data

analysis procedures. By states within regions, the sample population of usuable responses is displayed in Table 2.

Insert Table 2 about here

Types of Cooperative Arrangements

The most frequently reported cooperative in the regions surveyed is the joint agreement cooperative that provides regional special education services while administrative authority remains with the local school district. Voluntary cooperatives where administrative authority is granted by member school districts to a new unit of administrative authority are also popular. This survey did not discover any school study councils. Satellite cooperatives where one school district assumes administrative authority for special education programs provided by neighboring school districts are rarely reported. Regional state agencies where administrative authority rests with the State Department of Education are also scarce (see Table 3).

Insert Table 3 about here

Size of Cooperatives

Rural cooperatives show a wide degree of variation on several size dimensions including geographical area served, number of school districts

served, and number of students served. A rural cooperative may serve a geographic area covering as few as 13 or as many as 16,000 square miles. It may serve as few as 2 or as many as 115 school districts. A cooperative may also serve as few as 50 or as many as 180,000 students. For data analysis, each size attribute was grouped into three categories; small, medium and large (see Table 4).

Insert Table 4 about here

Relationships

An examination of the relationship between type of cooperative arrangement and each of the seven scales revealed chi square values ranging ranging from 1.62 with a significance level of .95 for the programming scale to 9.31 with a significance level of .16 for the placement scale (see Table 5). No significant relationships emerged between type of cooperative arrangement and any of the compliance scales.

Insert Table 5 about here

An investigation of the relationship between geographic area and each of the seven compliance scales ensued (see Table 6). In these analyses, chi square ranged from 2.61 with a significance level of .86 to 18.86 with a significance level of less than .01. Significant relationships emerged between geographic area served by the cooperative and both the assessment

and placement scales. Further examination of the data revealed that for both of these scales large (greater than 2000 sq. mi.) cooperatives reported the greatest degree of compliance while medium sized (851-2000 sq. mi.) cooperatives revealed the most difficulty.

Insert Table 6 about here

An analysis of the number of school districts served and each of the seven scales followed (See Table 7). Chi square ranged from 4.02 with a .67 significance level to 11.09 with a .09 signifcance level. No significant relationships emerged between number of school districts served and any of the compliance scales.

Insert Table 7 about here

Next, an examination of the relationship between number of students served and each of the seven scales was conducted (See Table 8). In these analyses, chi square ranged from .93 with a .99 significance level to 10.42 with a .11 significance level. Significant relationships between number of students served by the cooperative and compliance with PL94-142 failed to emerge.

Insert Table 8 about here

The following items were judged least difficult for rural cooperatives to implement since 75% of the cooperatives surveyed indicated that they always complied with these items.

1. Individual assessments are performed by qualified personnel (98%).

2. Parental permission is obtained prior to assessing a child suspected of having special education needs (93%).

3. Parental approval is obtained prior to placing a student in a special education program (92%).

4. Due process procedures exist to resolve conflicts that arise between the parents and the school district regarding any aspect of the special education placement procedures (88%).

5. IEPs are reviewed on a yearly basis (85%)

6. Special education teachers attend the IEP review meeting (83%).

7. Children are assessed in their native language (83%).

8. Child Find activities are conducted (81%).

9. The IEP contains all the components required by law (80%).

10. The parents of each child referred for special education evaluation receive an explanation of their rights (77%).

11. Evaluations are conducted by a multidisciplinary team (77%).

12. No single procedure is used as sole criterion for placement in a special education program (77%).

13. If parents disagree with the team decision, attempts are made to reconcile differences (75%).

In contrast, the responding cooperatives reportedly always complied with the following items a maximum of 30% of the time. These items therefore appear to pose the most difficulty for rural cooperatives.

1. Regular educators are prepared to handle special education students placed in the regular classroom (6%).

2. Regular educators take responsibility for special education students placed in their classrooms (16%).

3. Teachers who refer students for special education services are given suggestions to help accommodate these students (19%).

4. Assessments are completed within the time limit specified by PL94-142 (20%).

5. Evaluation personnel attend the IEP review meeting (26%).

6. Inservice programs on special education procedures are provided for regular educators (26%).

7. Classroom alternatives are tried before a student is referred for special education services (30%).

8. Special educators know special education laws (28%).

9. Parents attend IEP meetings (30%).

Discussion

In rural areas of Federal Education Regions IV and V, the joint agreement cooperative is the most frequently used cooperative for special education services. One reason for the popularity of this model is the retention of administrative authority by the member school districts. Maintenance of authority enhances local ownership of cooperative programs. The joint agreement cooperative also protects local autonomy, another of the components deemed necessary for a successful rural cooperative.

Joint agreement cooperatives are not delegated authority by member districts which can lead to unclear lines of responsibility and competition rather than cooperation among member school districts. The lack of administrative authority also makes it difficult to attract and retain qualified leaders. Without strong leadership, mission clarity and ongoing planning are hampered. Because funding is based on allocations from member districts, if even one district decides it does not want a specific service, the entire program may be jeopardized.

The effectiveness of the joint agreement cooperative is also brought into question by respondent comments. Respondents felt that the lack of administrative authority was detrimental to providing needed services. Thus, despite its popularity, the joint agreement cooperative may not be the most effective arrangement for special education services in rural areas.

If the type of cooperative arrrangement is not mandated, various arrangements should be investigated prior to selection. In deciding the type of arrangement to employ, attention should be given to each of the components needed for a successful cooperative. Because delegation of authority is essential, arrangements such as the voluntary cooperative or the satellite cooperative are advised.

By definition, the voluntary cooperative is delegated administrative authority by its constituents. The cooperative assumes responsibility for special education programs. The structure of the voluntary cooperative maintains local ownership of programs while fostering a spirit of cooperation. This should lead to the appropriation of adequate resources. In addition, a governing board, usually comprised of local school personnel, enables mission clarity, ongoing planning, and clear lines of authority while providing the leadership to maintain cooperative efficacy. Thus, voluntary cooperatives can possess all the components deemed necessary for a successful rural cooperative.

The satellite cooperative also has the potential to provide the requisite components. The satelite cooperative involves a confederation of

neighboring school districts with administrative authority delegated to a designated district that assumes administrative responsibility for all special education programs provided by member school districts. It also provides the leadership needed for cooperative success.

The structure of the satellite cooperative maintains local autonomy and ownership of special education programs while fostering a cooperative spirit. Representatives of participating districts meet regularly to assure ongoing planning, mission clarity, and clear lines of responsibility. It must be noted that, by definition, satellite cooperatives are limited to proximate school districts. Given school district consolidation, this configuration is becoming increasingly rare making the satellite cooperative unfeasible in many areas.

In the regions surveyed, cooperatives serving the largest geographic areas (greater than 2000 sq. mi.) report the greatest degree of compliance with mandates related to assessment and placement of students referred for special education services. This result was contradictory to the hypothesis. Cooperatives serving the smallest geographic areas (less than 851 sq. mi.) did report greater compliance than medium sized cooperatives (851-20000 sq. mi.). This may result from the larger service area generating a greater fiscal base with which to provide services. It may also result from the use of alternative personnel and agencies to assess students. Compliance with mandates concerning assessment would enhance compliance with mandates concerning placement as adequate assessments are needed before children can receive special education services. Furthermore, evaluation personnel may facilitate the placement process.

Despite these findings, respondents frequently cited large geographic distances as hampering the provision of special education services. Respondents commented that transportation difficulties resulting from large geographic distances inhibit the provision of quality special education programs. The time relegated to travel for both students and staff was cited. It should be noted that transportation costs may totally negate the cost efficiency of cooperative programs (Sher, 1977). Moreover, because smaller cooperatives enhance local program ownership, it is recommended that geographic area, number of school districts served, and number of students served should be limited.

The PL94-142 mandates that prove least difficult for the rural cooperatives surveyed can be divided into three major categories; (1) parental rights, (2) assessment issues, and (3) the Individual Education Plan (IEP). Each of these catgories will be discussed.

Rural school districts apparently have little difficulty obtaining parental permission to assess students referred for special education services. Survey respondents also report little difficulty obtaining permission to place students in special education programs. These findings coincide with the findings of a longitudinal study concerning the implementation of PL94-142 conducted by the Stanford Research Institute (Write, 1982) and may result in part from the preliminary emphasis and institutionalization of PL94-142 procedural requirements as well as the existence of adequate due process procedures. It may also be related to parents' willingness to unquestioningly accept school district decisions. This is not surprising in view of traditional rural values that afford the

school and its personnel a highly respected place in the community making it difficult for some parents to question the school's decisions. Furthermore, despite the provision of the law requiring that parents be informed of their rights, parents may not understand these rights. This occurs because parents are often provided a paper listing the rights specified by PL94-142. Moreover, parental permission may be obtained via mail further limiting the opportunity to clarify questions and assure complete understanding of these rights.

Compliance with items concerning assessment of students referred for special education services proved remarkably easy for the rural cooperatives surveyed despite reported difficulties recruiting and retaining qualified personnl. It therefore appears that the means of providing adequate special education assessments do exist. One explanation for compliance with issues regarding student assessment is the use of community service personnel or services located at some distance from the local school. While such arrangements may preclude the provision of services on a regular basis, they are sufficient to provide the assessments needed. It is also important to note that student assessments did not occur within the time limit specified by PL94-142. This may result from variations between state and federal timelines. It may also result from the existence of assessment backlogs (Write, 1982).

Assessing students in their native language did not pose a problem for the rural cooperatives surveyed. As several respondents indicated, this issue had rarely, if ever arisen due to an absence of non-English speaking students.

Child Find activities are also reported frequently by survey respondents. This also coincides with the Stanford Reasearch Institute's findings. Moreover, in rural communities, people tend to know each other. This makes handicapped children readily identifiable. In addition, due to scarce resources and rural tradition, public agencies tend to work together. This enhances the Child Find process.

Most IEPs reportedly contain all required components. It is not unreasonable to assume that the use of state or regional forms that clearly indicate the required components account for the high degree of compliance noted. In addition, the specificity of the law, the emphasis on procedural requirements, and the state and federal monitoring procedures that regularly occur may also contribute to the ease of compliance.

IEP reviews generally occur on a yearly basis as specified by law. Within the regions studied, the special education teacher usually attends these meetings. Since a small number of students receive special education services, it is relatively easy for special educators to keep track of student needs and attend the review meetings.

The items that proved most difficult for rural cooperatives in complying with the federal mandates, according to this survey, are: (1) issues related to personnel knowlege regarding special education; (2) the timelines specified by the law (discussed previously); and, (3) parental attendance at IEP meetings.

From the results of this survey, regular educators appear either unwilling or unable to work with handicapped children in the regular

classroom. One possible explanation for this phenomenon is the lack of suggestions given to regular educators who have referred students for special education services. Another possible explanation is the lack of inservice education provided to regular educators regarding special education. Write (p 127) states that "continually pushing inservice training aside seems to pose an impediment to the successful implementation of PL94-142." Moreover, most of the inservice that has been conducted has been procedural in nature rather than applicable to staff problems. Therefore, resistance to mainstreaming persists.

Parental attendance at IEP meetings may be low because of distance factors. Considerable distance from the child's school due to sparse population, school district consolidation, and regional programs coupled with additional commitments (i.e. family, work, etc.) may preclude parental attendance at the scheduled meetings. Although the law does specify that meetings be held at mutually agreeable times, parents may not request an alternate meeting time due to either a lack of knowledge of their legal rights or their willingness to abide by the school's decisions (discussed previously).

Policy Implications

This survey raises several issues that have implications for both teacher training programs and state legislatures. The implications for each of these agencies will now be discussed.

Teacher Training Programs. This survey indicates that school personnel lack knowledge regarding special education. Thus, both pre-service and

inservice training programs for regular educators should include a greater emphasis on the handicapped child in the regular classroom. This training should include a series of courses that encompass:

1. an overview of special education including information concerning a variety of handicapping conditions;
2. the legal mandates and their ramifications for the classroom teacher;
3. practical methods for modifying the classroom to accomodate handicapped children; and,
4. practical experiences that enable both current and prospective educators to realistically practice these techniques.

This training should be retroactive (required of all teachers currently in the field as well as those in training). It should also be conducted at the local school district level for practicing teachers to assure applicability and transfer of skills learned.

Not only do regular classroom teachers need additional training, special educators also need additional training. Rural special educators are often responsible for the entire special education program. Current teacher training programs do not prepare the future special educator to assume this role and the accompanying responsibilities. Thus, rural special education training programs should include a series of courses that:

1. familiarize students with all aspects of PL94-142 including its implications for the school;

2. teach administrative skills including: policy and program development and implementation; finance; and curriculum development;
3. prepare special educators to consult with regular educators regarding the placement of handicapped children including procedures for modifying the classroom environment as well as adapting teaching materials and methodology;
4. provide consultation skills for working with parents, administrators, and other agencies; and,
5. provide assessment skills, including the ability to: conduct both formal and informal assessments; understand psychological and other types of assessment reports; and translate assessment data into educational programs.

With this training, special educators should be able to assume the roles and responsibilities demanded of the rural special education teacher.

While this survey shows that regular administrators have slightly better knowledge regarding special education than do teachers, most lack an understanding of special education laws and procedures. Since regular administrators often have responsibility for building special education programs, all rural administrative personnel should have training in:

1. special education laws, requirements, and procedures as well as their implications at the building level; and,
2. special education policy development.

Personnel considerations were frequently cited as posing difficulties for rural special education cooperatives. Inability to attract qualified

staff was mentioned by many respondents. This is not surprising as Helge (1983) reports that 66% of the districts surveyed used emergency credentials to meet special education staffing needs.

Frequent staff turnover also poses problems for rural cooperatives. Helge reports an attrition rate of 30-50% among new rural special educators. Thus, teacher training institutions must institute programs that train special educators to serve in rural areas. These programs should:

1. actively recruit students from rural areas;
2. familiarize students with rural special education;
3. include extensive rural internships;
4. provide special educators with generalizable, non-categorical skills that will enable them to work with children possessing a variety of handicapping conditions;
5. train students to develop community resources;
6. enable students to serve as their own resources; and,
6. provide follow-up assistance for rural special educators during their first year of teaching.

These types of programs are important because when special educators are trained specifically for service in rural areas, turnover rates diminsh (Helge, 1984a).

State Legislature. Given the above recommendations for changes in teacher training programs, state licensure requirements should be monitored or reformulated to assure that both regular and special educators have both the skills and knowledge necessary to provide quality programs to

handicapped children residing in rural areas. Moreover, given the sparse population base and large distances inherent in rural areas as well as the difficulties recruiting and retaining qualified personnel, it is imperative that states modify their teacher certification procedures to meet the needs of rural areas. Non-categorical certification that allows special educators to work with children having a variety of handicapping conditions has been successfully implemented in several states (i.e. Massachusetts and California). This type of certification is imperative as it allows more children to be served in their home school with a properly trained and certified teacher. Other states (i.e. Wyoming and Wisconsin) have also initiated certification requirements that are responsive to the needs of rural schools.

Another policy issue for state legislatures, funding, arises from respondent comments. Many survey respondents indicated that funding inadequacies led to service delivery problems. This occurs because the very nature of rural areas increases the cost of special education services. This makes current reimbursements for special eduction programs inadequate to provide a free appropriate public education to handicapped children residing in rural areas.

Respondents also commented concerning a lack of funds to provide services to students with low-incidence handicapping conditions. Programs for this population are expensive because of the student's service needs. Moreover, by definition, these types of handicaps occur infrequently. Hence, a rural school district may have but one or two children with a specific condition further increasing educational costs.

A lack of funds to attract qualified personnel was also cited as hampering the provision of quality special education programs. Survey respondents commented that the teacher salaries offered by rural school districts are not competitive with their urban counterparts. This makes it difficult to hire the personnel needed to provide quality special education programs.

It is therefore imperative that state legislatures recognize the additional costs inherent in providing special education services in sparsely populated areas. Weighted funding formulas that recognize the additional costs incurred by rural school districts in providing special education services should be implemented (Sher, 1977). Only then will equity of service be achieved.

Summary and Conclusions

This study investigates cooperative arrangements for special education services in rural areas. Of the administrative arrangements investigated, the joint agreement cooperative is used most frequently by the cooperatives surveyed. Type of cooperative arrangement does not appear to effect compliance with PL94-142 mandates.

Size does play a role in cooperative efficacy. Although cooperatives serving the largest geographic areas (greater than 2000 sq. mi.) report the greatest compliance with PL94-142 mandates concerning assessment and placement of children, respondents cited distance as hampering the provision of special education services. Thus, geographic area, number of

school districts and number of students served by the cooperative should be limited when feasible.

This study also delineated several policy issues concerning the provision of quality special education programs in rural areas.

First, teacher training institutions need to alter their preparation programs for both regular and special educators. All programs preparing educators to serve in rural areas should include:

1. familiarity with special education laws and procedures;
2. ability to modify the curriculum to accomodate handicapped learners;
3. specialized training concerning education in rural areas; and,
4. generalizable non-categorical special education skills.

Second, teacher certification boards should examine their teaching license requirements. To comply with the law and provide appropriate programs for all handicapped children, every regular educator needs to be familiar with a variety of handicapping conditions. Regular educators must also be able to accomodate the needs of handicapped children within the regular classroom. Moreover, special educators need to be knowledgeable concerning state and federal special education requirements. In addition, states that do not currently have rural and non-categorical special education certification should institute these types of teaching licenses. Only when the above conditions are met will rural school districts be able

to hire adequately trained teachers and provide appropriate programs for the handicapped children they serve.

Third, the legislature needs to alter its funding formulas. These formulas need to be sensitive to the increased service costs experienced by rural school districts in the education of handicapped children. Only when adequate funds are available will equity of services be provided to all children throughout the nation.

Finally, further study of these issues is warranted to determine if the results of this study are representative of the entire country. This information would be useful for rural policy development and woueld enhance the provision of special education services to handicapped children residing in rural areas.

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Table 1

Scale Reliability

Scale	Alpha	Standardized Item Alpha
Assessment	.71	.74
Placement	.73	.74
Programming	.78	.79
Teacher Knowledge	.71	.71
Admin. Knowledge	.82	.83
In-service	.77	.77
General Compliance	.85	.85

Table 2

Responding Cooperatives

Region IV				Region V			
State	Eligible Respondents	Responses Received	%	State	Eligible Respondents	Responses Received	%
Alabama	1	1	100	Illinois	21	16	76
Georgia	13	12	92	Indiana	19	19	100
Kentucky	12	12	100	Michigan	21	18	86
Tennessee	1	1	100	Minnesota	35	30	86
				Ohio	7	6	86
				Wisconsin	20	14	70
Totals	27	26	96		123	103	87

Table 3

Cooperative Arrangements Reported

Agency	Absolute Frequency	Relative Frequency
Regional State Agency	2	2%
Intermediate District	23	18%
Mandated Regional Agency	9	7%
Special School District	7	4%
Voluntary Cooperative	32	25%
Joint Agreement Cooperative	49	38%
Satellite Cooperative	5	4%
Unspecified	2	2%
Totals	129	100%

Table 4

Size Categories

Attribute	Small		Medium		Large	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Geographical Size	< 851	34%	851-2000	33%	> 2000	33%
Districts	< 7	34%	7- 12	33%	> 12	33%
Students	< 8001	37%	8001-1500	32%	>15000	31%

Table 5

Cooperative Arrangement by Scales

Scale	Chi Square	Significance
Assessment	4.06	.67
Placement	9.31	.16
Programming	1.62	.95
Teacher Knowledge	7.72	.26
Admin. Knowledge	8.74	.19
In-service	5.84	.44
General Compliance	8.01	.24

Table 6

Geographic Size by Scales

Scale	Chi Square	Significance
Assessment	13.89	.03*
Placement	18.86	<.01*
Programming	3.36	.75
Teacher Knowledge	10.18	.10
Admin. Knowledge	5.53	.48
In-service	2.51	.86
General Compliance	7.78	.25

$\chi^2(6, N=129)=12.59$, $p<.05$

Table 7

School Districts by Scales

Scale	Chi Square	Significance
Assessment	8.76	.19
Placement	4.06	.67
Programming	5.06	.54
Teacher Knowledge	11.10	.09
Admin. Knowledge	4.91	.56
In-service	10.20	.12
General Compliance	4.02	.67

$\chi^2(6, N=129)=12.59, p<.05$

Table 8

Students by Scales

Scale	Chi Square	Significance
Assessment	6.20	.40
Placement	10.47	.11
Programming	8.23	.27
Teacher Knowledge	4.43	.62
Admin. Knowledge	2.69	.85
In-service	.93	.99
General Compliance	5.20	.52

$\chi^2(6, N=129)=12.59, p<.05$